

BACKGROUND

The test pit was positioned against the building called Simons Sundial Cottage, Grid Ref SD 76833 16013, in order to try and provide dating evidence for the building. The excavation took place on the 13th February 2016.

METHODOLOGY

An area on the South East corner of the building had been picked as a suitable position for a one square metre test pit. On checking the 1850 first edition map, it was discovered that a boundary wall was positioned heading South from the corner of the building, so it was decided that the test pit would be positioned on the Eastern side of the corner to avoid hitting any possible wall foundations.

After a sweep using a metal detector had given us no hits in the area the 1m test pit was laid in.

RESULTS

The area was a mix of loam and stone rubble and was extremely wet and boggy which made for very difficult excavation conditions. There was evidence of a flagstone surface around the immediate area of the Eastern wall of the building, but this was noted to be missing from the area of the test pit and may already have been removed which may have accounted for the disturbance. The disturbed nature of the fill was born out when we discovered a rough drain had been laid in running roughly South West to North East at a depth of 30cm. The width of the drain cap stones was roughly 30cm as far as could be ascertained given the conditions. The drain itself had been very roughly constructed using bricks and reused pieces of ceramic blocks, possibly from an old sink / basin, and had a flagstone top. The drain appeared to be sat on natural clay.

The foundation for the building was stepped out from the building line by 20cm and this was also visibly the case for the return on the Southern wall too. The depth to the base of the foundation from the ground surface was 60cm down to the natural clay and gravel. The depth from the ground surface to the top of the step in the foundation was 22cm and then 38cm down to the natural clay. The corner stone at the base of the foundation measured 60cm long x 20cm deep. The foundation was constructed of a rough undressed stone and in the corner was two courses deep.

The pottery sherds recovered from the test pit are all of a 19th century date and are a collection of earthenwares and stonewares. Various assortments of metal objects were found, mostly undiagnostic, but were all again fairly modern in date.



Foundation and drain cap stone, showing brick and ceramic wall for drain



Showing flagstone surface by the side of the test pit



Looking down into the test pit and showing the drain and wall foundation



1850 OS Map showing Simons Sundial Cottage and the position of the Test Pit